

(Draft – Awaiting Formal Approval)

**MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

Tuesday, November 25, 2014 – 2:00 p.m. – Room 445 – State Capitol

Members Present:

President Wayne L. Niederhauser, Senate Chair
Sen. Gene Davis
Sen. Patricia W. Jones
Sen. Stuart C. Reid
Sen. Howard H. Stephenson
Sen. Stephen H. Urquhart
Rep. Jack R. Draxler
Rep. Francis D. Gibson
Rep. Keith Grover
Rep. Carol Spackman Moss

Members Absent:

Speaker Rebecca D. Lockhart, House Chair
Sen. Aaron Osmond
Rep. Bradley G. Last
Rep. Jennifer M. Seelig

Staff Present:

Ms. Tiffany A. Stanley, Policy Analyst
Ms. Constance C. Steffen, Policy Analyst
Ms. Allyson Goldstein, Policy Analyst
Ms. Angela Oakes Stallings, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Debra Hale, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Task Force Business

Chair Niederhauser called the meeting to order at 2:20 p.m. Sen. Osmond and Rep. Seelig were excused from the meeting.

MOTION: Sen. Reid moved to approve the minutes of the October 29, 2014, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Neiderhauser noted that the Utah State Office of Education has provided a report, "Smart School Technology Program Timeline," in response to a task force member's request at the October meeting, and that the report was included in the meeting packet.

Rep. Patrice Arent acknowledged the appreciated service of Ms. Steffen. She presented an official citation from the State of Utah, House of Representatives, to Ms. Steffen and wished her well in her retirement.

2. Education Strategic Plan

Mr. Alan E. Hall, Chair, Prosperity 2020, distributed a report written by Education First, "Prosperity through Education," and referred to the report and a visual presentation, "Education Strategic Plan." Mr. Hall said the report is a five-year strategic plan, based on rigorous research, to improve educational outcomes. He said the plan includes key assumptions, outcomes, investment needed, and accountability metrics, and is a starting point for a framework that can be modified.

Dr. Richard Kendell, Steering Committee, Education First, continued with the visual presentation and said that Education First represents a collaborative effort led by the business community to improve the quality of education in Utah. He said that the strategy uses proven best practices to give at-risk students a head start, so they can be at grade level by grade three.

Dr. David Doty, Education First, continued with the visual presentation and said the plan is tied to clear and specific metrics and outcomes supported by all major education stakeholders. He said that the plan's goals include having Utah rank among the top ten states in four areas:

- reading and literacy by the end of 4th and 8th grade;

- math proficiency by the end of 4th and 8th grade;
- high school graduation rate and rate of graduates college-ready, as measured by ACT scores; and
- percentage of adults obtaining a secondary degree or certificate.

Dr. Doty said that achieving these outcomes will help build the state's economic potential and that to achieve them, the strategic plan includes best practices being implemented in states with high educational achievement.

Mr. Lane Beattie, President and CEO, Salt Lake Chamber, said that investment in education is very important and provides economic opportunities. He said that the business community supports additional funding for education and is open to considering all possibilities, but noted that accountability is a critical element in strengthening education. In response to a task force member's question, Mr. Beattie said that the governor has seen the plan and is supportive of the processes that the business community used to develop it, but that ultimately the Legislature is responsible for funding education.

3. Review Proposed Legislation "Public Education Increased Funding Program"

Rep. Draxler distributed draft legislation "Public Education Increased Funding Program" (2015FL-0355/016) and said the legislation raises the individual income tax rate from 5% to 6% and directs 75% of the additional revenue toward performance-based pay for teachers and 25% of the additional revenue toward digital technology. Rep. Draxler said that prior to 2007, the individual tax rate was 7%, and the recession caused revenue to decrease. He said that though Utah ranks high nationally in business, the state ranks low in education and must increase funding in order to have a world-class education system.

Referring to a handout, "Tax Change Scenarios by Tax and Selected Individual Situations," Rep. Draxler explained the effects of the proposed tax increase on Utah families of varying income levels. He said that polls show voters are willing to pay more for education but want accountability for the increased funding.

4. Review Proposed Legislation "Digital Teaching and Learning Program"

Chair Niederhauser turned the chair to Sen. Reid.

Sen. Stephenson distributed and discussed draft legislation "Digital Teaching and Learning Program" (2015FL-0016/011) and a handout, "Digital Learning / One-to-World Framework," and said that the proposed program includes best practices of digital programs that have demonstrated improved student performance. He said the bill creates a competitive grant program that will provide local education agencies up to 25% of the funding needed for a digital technology program for a limited number of years.

Ms. Stallings reviewed the bill and said that it creates a competitive grant program for participating local education agencies to improve student outcomes through the use of digital teaching, learning technology, and educator professional development. She said the Utah Education and Telehealth Network (UETN), in consultation with the Utah State Board of Education and an advisory committee established by the bill, will administer the program. She said that the bill requires UETN to create a statewide master plan for digital teaching and learning, and requires local education agencies to submit plans in order to apply for the program and receive grant money. She said that the UETN board, working with an independent third party evaluator, will oversee ongoing review and evaluation of the program.

Mr. Terry E. Shoemaker, Superintendent of Schools, Wasatch County School District, said the proposed legislation addresses the most important factors in a successful digital teaching and learning program, which include:

- professional development;
- devices that successfully support content and curriculum; and
- readily available technical support for devices and teachers.

Mr. Shoemaker said he supports having UETN administer the program, as UETN has experience with technology, and he also supports the creation of a statewide master plan, as required by the bill. He noted that small local education agencies, such as charter schools, may face challenges applying for the grant and may need to form consortiums to apply.

5. Community Schools: Supporting Principals in Improving Academic Achievement

Mr. Bill Crim, Senior Vice President, Collective Impact and Public Policy, United Way of Salt Lake, referred to a visual presentation, "Community Schools," and distributed handouts, "What is a Community School," and "Community Schools Support Principal Leadership." Mr. Crim said that schools are very successful at educating children, but children living in poverty face many challenges that schools are not prepared to address. He said that the Community Schools program uses public-private partnerships to provide needed services so that schools can focus on educating children. In addition, he noted that in high poverty environments, schools that are open to the community can play an important role beyond education.

Ms. Amber Clayton, Principal and Lead Learner, Granger Elementary School, Granite School District, continued with the visual presentation and said collaboration can improve outcomes in poor communities. She said the Community School partnership includes a full-time United Way coordinator in the school, which has not only helped connect students to needed services, but has also improved academic achievement. Ms. Clayton said elementary school provides the foundation for kids to graduate from high school and that education can break the cycle of intergenerational poverty. She said that community schools have high levels of parent involvement, which provides the first key step to improving a school.

Mr. Nathan Savage, Senior Vice President, Savage Services Corporation, spoke of the corporation's relationship with United Way of Salt Lake and continued with the visual presentation. He said that from 2013 to 2014, partnerships between the United Way and schools have resulted in improved student proficiency.

Dr. Martin Bates, Superintendent, Granite School District, spoke of his appreciation of United Way and the Community Schools program. He continued with the visual presentation and said that school districts are skilled at providing the core instructional program, but when students bring other challenges to school, schools need support from partners. He said that partnering with the United Way not only brings a community together to remove barriers to education, but it also improves student proficiency in reading.

Chair Reid returned the chair to President Niederhauser.

Chair Neidershauser said that he would like to use the community schools model to provide resources and funds to assist school principals.

6. Task Force Report

Ms. Steffen reviewed, "2014 – Draft Education Task Force Report," a draft of the report the task force is required to provide to the Executive Appropriations and Education Interim Committees. She discussed recommendations and findings from the areas studied in the 2014 task force and welcomed feedback, questions, and requests from the task force.

Chair Niederhauser said that the chairs will review comments and suggestions from the task force and incorporate them into the final report.

7. Other Task Force Business/Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Gibson moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Urquhart was absent for the vote.

Chair Niederhauser adjourned the meeting at 5:02 p.m.